



The Adventures of SÖLÖRDEN

in
Lower California

1874

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JULY 1, my day watch on deck from six to eight; was lying on the top of the cabin taking my smoke, when Manuel sang out "Land, ho!" Just under our lee was the island of Guadalupe,⁵ not ten miles distant. The island is eighteen miles long, and from five to six wide. The breeze died away—sails flapped to the mast—dead calm all night and hazy; could see smoke on the island; launched my little boat and our Gibraltar friend, Manuel and myself, and two pair of sculls, made her jump out of the water. In half an hour we were close to the beach, when the people on shore made us signal to land, so we headed for the surf. Manuel jumped on shore with the boat painter, which was seized by all on shore and they landed us high and dry.

One venerable looking Mexican invited us, in very good English, to step up to his house, where we proceeded at once. He treated us to some fresh goats' milk and goat cheese. In return, I gave him some tobacco and a bottle of "slippery elm," when he presented me with a very fine goat. Not wishing to be outdone in generosity, I presented him with a copy of Thistle-ton's Illustrated *Jolly Giant*, which I fortunately had in my pocket. He began to read it, and asked me how much it cost by the month; I told him, when he immediately drew out his purse and handed me four dollars for a year's subscription. He said he wanted them sent to San Diego, for José Jeans López, Guadalupe Island, where a schooner calls twice a year. The business on the island is goat raising, for the skins and cheese. As we saw the ensign hoisted as a signal for our return to the schooner, we had to bid our newly found friends "adios"—the wind was already beginning to fill the sails.

In the afternoon we saw several large whales very near us. The wind was light, and our skipper being an old whaler, "got

⁵ The island of Guadalupe, an extinct volcano, is located 180 miles off the coast of central Baja California. The Mexican government maintains a garrison on one side of the island for the protection of the elephant seal herd.

his back up," and nothing would do but he must get a whale. So he got the harpoon and whale line ready, then launched my small boat. Manuel, Bill and himself got into her and started for a large, lazy fellow, who was not a quarter of a mile distant. Got along side of him, but just as they were about to launch the harpoon, he dove—then they had to pull like the very devil, but succeeded in getting a harpoon into him, when he started for soundings. After a time he came up to blow, then started at a terrific rate, heading S.E. All that we could see of the boat was a cloud of smoke, and in fifteen minutes it was entirely out of sight. A light breeze sprang up, and in an hour we came in sight of the boat and a monster hump-backed whale. Should judge by a rough calculation, that he would measure between eighty and ninety feet. We took a good look at him, got the boat on board, and proceeded on our voyage. Caught a large albatross, and after a good deal of trouble got him on board and succeeded in making him fast. I put a copy of the *Jolly Giant* in a small bottle, sealed it up, and fastening the bottle around the neck of the albatross, sent him on his way rejoicing. Also sealed up a copy in another bottle and cast it overboard, hoping that it might be cast ashore in some foreign land—Ireland, for instance, and be the means of converting some of the poor heathens to the true faith.

The crew are polishing the brass-work and putting things in order for the 4th of July. Shall have two holidays, Saturday and Sunday.

August 29, 1874

JULY 2ND. Wind last night was light; steering S.E. by E.; very calm; 4 a.m., called the watch, not forgetting the cook—had coffee; set the crew, which is Manuel, to washing down the decks. All hands busy scraping down the spars, making the *Midge* look as tidy as a new pin; immense fields of sea-weed pass us; had an idea that there were soundings; took the deep